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Duxbury Clipper



The Charles Thomas House

Thomas Dateboard Reveals History



The Charles Thomas House, a majestic home in the neo-classical style, received a dateboard from the Duxbury Rural and Historical Society last Spring. The research on the home was conducted by Robert Dente.

Charles Thomas was born on March 19, 1807. Although the record is not clear, he was probably the son of Josiah Thomas and a relative of Winslow Thomas who lived in the vicinity of Powder Point in the 1700s. Of Charles we know little beyond the vital statistics associated with his family. He married Louisa Esther and had two sons, Henry and Edward in 1842 and 1848.

While the builder of the house is lost to the obscurity of time, the second owner of the

house is one of the most famous individuals of Massachusetts history. Daniel Webster, the renowned senator, bought the property from Charles Thomas in 1840. Webster, who owned a large estate in Marshfield, retained the property until 1849 when it was resold to Charles's wife, Louisa.

"It is probable," says researcher Robert Dente, "that Charles could not afford to keep the house and sold it to Webster, leasing it for nine years and then re-purchasing the property in his wife's name in 1849."

Webster was a frequent visitor to Duxbury establishments, including Ford's Store and the Cracker Tavern on Washington street run by John Winsor. He was, according to tradition, a good friend to shipbuilder Ezra Weston, II.

This transaction in 1840

took place during the height of Webster's political career. Charles Thomas had the rare distinction of negotiating a rental agreement with the Secretary of State to President Harrison. The term "absentee landlord" was perhaps an understatement for the Thomas family whose landlord was kept busy negotiating boundaries with Canada and generating opposition to the Mexican War on the floor of the Senate, among other things.

This house, with its interesting claim to fame as being owned by the U.S. Secretary of State, makes a fine addition to the ranks of dateboarded homes in Duxbury.

The first in a series of articles on houses which have received dateboards from the Duxbury Rural and Historical Society in the past year.